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RESEARCH

Good news: pesticides leach less than originally believed according to Cornell findings

ITHACA, N.Y. — Findings to further indicate that pesticide leaching is not as pronounced as often believed are to be released by Cornell University researchers in October.

Dr. Marty Petrovic of the Cornell University horticulture department has completed research into the leaching properties of 2,4-D, dicamba, Sevin, and Daconil. Three media were used in the trials: sand, sandy loam and silt loam.

According to Petrovic, the research findings are improvements over standard, conservative leaching models used by government agencies to indicate leaching potential.

What's interesting to Petrovic is that the models "should have predicted a lot more leaching than we actually found; there's something 'unique' in the turf system that's reducing the amount of pesticide

moving down.

"If people do use these models (as guides), and (independent tests) are not showing any leaching, that's probably true. If they show some leaching, then we may have to question whether more research is needed."

Petrovic conducted his research in the fall of 1989, and again this summer. The different seasons provided contrasting climatic conditions.

Earthworm activity also seems to play a part in product movement. Petrovic indicates the tests done in silt loam showed that substantial amounts of pesticides followed earthworm channels. These passageways allow water and pesticides to move deeper and faster.

Petrovic will present his complete findings at an arborist's association meeting in San Antonio, Oct. 21-26. □

LETTERS

Don't knock Earth Day

To the editor:

I read the June issue and was happy to see articles about finding ways to use less pesticides and control the problems of water use. We are trying to do the same thing here at the arboretum.

Then I read your editorial ("Earth Day at 'the zoo'"). Unfortunately, Mr. McIver has written a piece that I can only describe as nonsensical, self-serving, and unprofessional. The description of the people selected for the article sounded like his self-image was being threatened by a few of the more extreme elements of the environmental movement, and he apparently thinks the

whole landscape industry feels the same way.

Mr. McIver is living and thinking in the past. His insecurity about changes that are happening in this world shows through. You should be encouraging the industry to forge ahead with environmental responsibility, not bashing Earth Day.

Here at Mercer, we cooperated with Texaco and others during our Earth Day celebration in order to exchange ideas and bring about change in a meaningful manner. Doing business in the oil and chemical capital of the U.S., we know how these companies operate. There are signs of significant changes.

The description of Earth Day as a zoo and, indirectly, as a communist plot, could

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